**Blóð ok Íss: a Fairy Tale**
Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/346392.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rating: | Explicit |
| Archive Warning: | Graphic Depictions Of Violence |
| Category: | M/M |
| Fandom: | Thor (2011) |
| Relationship: | Loki/Thor |
| Additional Tags: | Alternate Universe - Fairy Tale |
| Language: | English |
| Collections: | Best Thorkis |
| Stats: | Published: 2012-02-24 Words: 20983 |

# Blóð ok Íss: a Fairy Tale

by stereobone

Summary

His father warned him never to go to Jotunheim. Fairy Tale AU.

Notes

This entire fic came about thanks to crowthis, as she is my muse, though she refuses to admit it. She drew some glorious artwork (pictured below) and I thought I'd write some fic for it, and then it turned into a beastly thing. Again, this is written as a fairy tale, so I experimented with some older language, and basically twisted the canon around to suit the plot. A special thanks to Genue for being my cheerleader while I wrote this. Also, the title is in Old Norse, and means Blood and Ice. Okay enough chatter.

**--**

His father warned him never to go to Jotunheim.

"Giants live there," his father told him. "Terrible giants of ice and magic. To go there would mean your death."

Thor, who was a man now but still young in mind, still a boy in so many ways, took that as a challenge. Thor had heard the stories many times growing up, stories of a Great War, and Jotunheim threatening the peace of the nine realms, but Odin silenced them with his armies. It didn't make sense to him now, a thousand later, to still fear them.

"We are gods," he said. "We go where we please, father."

"Not there," Odin said. His tone was final, regal. The tone of a king. "I forbid it."

And Thor bowed to him, placed a kiss upon his father's knuckles, but Odin's words rolled off his back like water. Thor was stubborn in the way most princes were, thickheaded at times, though smart and honorable, destined to take over the throne. Born to be a king. He was still sheltered in many ways, despite having fought wars at Odin's side, he was always carefully shielded in battle, Mjölnir singing at his side. They had travelled everywhere together, across all the nine realms.

Everywhere but Jotunheim.

"My father fears something there."

Sif looked up at Thor from across the table, her sword laid out between them. Thor had a look in his eyes that Sif knew all too well.

"You would defy your father," she said. "Thor you are a fool."

She picked up her sword and ran a cloth over it, cleaning the blade carefully.

"And then you are a fool, too," Thor said. "I can see it in your eyes that you wish to come with me."

"I don't wish for death, which is all that you will find in Jotunheim."

"Nonsense." Thor picked up Mjölnir, swinging her idly in his hand, trying to draw Sif's attention. "I have Mjölnir, the most powerful weapon in all the realms. I do not fear these giants my father speaks of."

Sif brought up her sword and placed it on Thor's hammer, stifling his movements.

"What will you do, then?" she asked.

"I will bring my father back the head of one of these so called giants. Then he will see there is nothing to fear."

"And if you die?"

Thor laughed.

"I have no plans to do that," he said.

--

He rode off the next morning before dawn, before any in Asgard had awoken. Heimdall stood before him at the gate, eyes placid.

He already knew of Thor's plan.

"You would disobey your father and travel to Jotunheim, young prince?"

"Will you tell him?"

Heimdall did not move.

"I am sworn to tell the king of anyone leaving the kingdom, especially his only son."

"This will not threaten the safety of Asgard," Thor said. "I am to be your king one day, Heimdall."

"As I am well aware," Heimdall replied. "Nevertheless, I cannot knowingly allow-"

"Then you did not know."

Thor's horse whined underneath him, restless. Thor was restless as well, hands tight on the reigns. He wasn't going to let this stop him. He wanted to get to Jotunheim, to explore it and bring back a prize his father was sure to be proud of.

"Let me through, great Heimdall," Thor said. "And I will return with the head of a giant."

Heimdall bowed his head.

"You are still young, Thor. You do not know-"

"That is an order," Thor said.

He was still a prince, after all.

--

Jotunheim was freezing. Thor had expected as much, but despite the furs he had on, the cold still managed to seep through and sting at his bones. He was in a wasteland, literally, blinding winds and snow made it nearly impossible to see, but then there was nothing for him to see at all. The mountains seemed to be made of ice, and after almost an hour of travel Thor had not seen even one of these terrible giants his father spoke of.

He felt stupid, and also annoyed at having wasted his time. He expected a battle almost immediately upon entering the world, a vicious group of giants for him to kill. There was nothing.

Thor wondered how anything could have survived out here in the first place. He had seen no trees, no vegetation of any kind. Jotunheim felt almost clean in its waste, nothing had died because nothing could grow. There was just white. Thor steered his horse off the curve of a mountain, down into a valley where the snow wasn't as thick.

The wind felt different, then, colder, and something green caught Thor's eye. It was like a mist, and then suddenly it was gone, and in its place Thor saw a man. For a moment he thought it was a hallucination, but his horse shifted and snorted, and Thor knew that the man was real. He was certainly not what he was expecting.

"You are no giant," Thor said.

"Clearly," the man said.

His skin was that of a Frost Giant, though, Thor knew that much. A cold blue with markings that seemed like scars on his skin. Thor touched the handle of Mjölnir, ready to use her if needed.

"What are you doing here, Aesir," the man said. "So far from home?"

"I came to slay a giant." Thor looked the man up and down. He was certainly no giant - thin and wiry looking, perhaps shorter than Thor was. "But I see none around."

The man laughed softly, and his voice carried around them into the wind and made Thor shiver.

"What have you really come for?" the man asked.

Thor frowned. "I just told you."

"Then slay me," the man said, and opened his arms.

Thor's horse startled, though the man did nothing more. It sensed something, though, something about this man and Thor was starting to sense it as well.

"You are not very big for a giant," Thor said. "More like a runt."

The man didn't seem affected at all by Thor's comment. He brought his arms down to his side and titled his head as if he was studying Thor. His hair was long and wild, stark black against the white landscape.

"You would do well not to let your eyes deceive you, young prince."

Thor drew Mjölnir, forcing the man to stare her down.

"How did you know that? Speak."

"I know everything about you," the man said, and the winds picked up again, a force so strong that Thor had to pull Mjölnir back or risk dropping her.

Through the blinding wind, Thor could see the man once more as he leaned close to him, cradling Thor's face in his palms. His hands were freezing, cold as the ice itself. He pressed his lips to Thor's and it was cold enough to burn, a cold that seeped down Thor's throat right into his heart. Thor didn't move, felt as if he couldn't, as if he were frozen. The man pulled away just enough and Thor could see that his face was suddenly pale skinned like Thor's. He looked like an Aesir.

"What is this," Thor said.

The man didn't answer. His body dissolved like sand, and became crows that scattered every which way into the sky. He was gone just as easily as he had appeared, and Thor's lips were left tingling with the cold.

For a long time, Thor did not move, but when he felt he could again, he rode fast for home.

--

Heimdall said nothing when he came back through the gate with no giant's head.

--

At dinner the next eve, Sif tried to ask Thor about his hunt.

"Did you see them?" she asked. "The Frost Giants. Were they terrible?"

"I saw nothing," Thor said, voice stiff.

He felt an itch about himself all night, like someone was watching him. The food felt all too hot in his lips, nothing like the cool touch of the man he'd met in Jotunheim. Thor wanted to look for him again, the man with skin like a Frost Giant but a build more like an Asgardian. A wielder of magic.

Thor wanted to know his name.

He was curious about him, drawn to him in a way that he wasn't ready to explore. He had never seen a sorcerer that close before, and Thor had so many questions he wanted to ask him. Why he was in Jotunheim in the first place, and if he were truly a Frost Giant, why was he so small?

Odin's hand on his shoulder startled him back to reality, back to the golden warmth of Asgard.

"What troubles you, my son?"

"Nothing, father," Thor said.

"You've barely eaten a thing. Your goblet is still full of mead."

Thor frowned at his plate. It was a marvelous supper: a roast of wild boar and potatoes, one Thor's favorite dishes.

"I am merely tired, father," he said.

"Yes, I was looking for you for some time the other day," Odin said. "Sif said you were training."

Thor kept his eyes down, silently thanking Sif's lie. "I was. Perhaps I overexerted myself."

"You should retire early, then. I am holding court tomorrow, and I wish for you to be present."

Thor didn't want to attend the court. He wanted to travel back to Jotunheim, and look for the sorcerer again. That was a risky thing, though. Thor was lucky Heimdall did not make Odin aware of where he had gone. Odin would have flogged them both, most likely.

"Aye," Thor said. "I'll finish my dinner in my chambers, then, if you don't mind."

All of the attendants of the dinner rose and bowed as Thor left.

--

It was only another week before Thor decided to travel back to Jotunheim. He was far too curious to stay in Asgard, not with the sorcerer out there in the wastes still. Thor thought about him often, and wondered if he'd been enchanted somehow by him. When they kissed, Thor felt something from it, something different than other kisses. The sorcerer's lips were so cold that Thor nearly froze, yet his insides felt warm after, charged. Electric.

He knew Heimdall wouldn't let him through the gate again, though. So he turned to Sif.

"You are mad," she said. "To go to Jotunheim again is certain death. Not to mention what your father would do if he found out."

"He won't," Thor said. "Not if you help me."

Sif shook her head. "I will not be dragged into your foolishness, Thor."

Thor dropped down to a knee, something he had never done before.

"Please, Sif. We will go for a hunt in Alfheim with the Warriors Three, and then I will depart from there. No one will be of the wiser."

"You would go alone? Thor, listen to yourself. If there was nothing there the first time, why would you go back?"

Thor didn't answer her.

"Thor," she said. "Is this so important to you that it is worth risking your life?"

"It is," Thor said.

He held Sif's hand in his, squeezing. She had always been fond of Thor, despite his faults and overly arrogant attitude, she knew he had a kind heart. Sif trusted Thor more than any man in Asgard.

"I still think it is madness," she said.

They departed the next day.

--

Thor took the same path as before once he entered Jotunheim, through the wastes and up the mountain until he was down in the valley again. The winds weren't as fierce as before, but the snow was still falling heavily. Thor wasn't sure it ever stopped in Jotunheim. He waited in the silence for a sign of the sorcerer, but there was none. Even without the blinding winds, Thor could see nothing but white snow and horizon for miles.

"Sorcerer," he called, and his voice boomed, carried over the wind and snow. If the sorcerer was out there, he'd hear him.

Thor waited, but there was still no sign of him. The cold had started to become unbearable, and Thor was annoyed at the sorcerer for not showing his face.

"A coward," he said. "Like all Frost Giants."

"I did not think you would come back."

Thor turned so quick his neck almost snapped. The sorcerer was standing beside him and his horse as if he had been there all along.

"I called for you," Thor said. "Why did you not come?"

The sorcerer shrugged. "I was busy."

"Busy with what?" Thor motioned to the landscape. "There is nothing here to be busy with."

The sorcerer shrugged again. He was blue before as Thor remembered him from their first meeting, wrapped in dark fur. Thor could still not bring himself to call the man a Frost Giant, no matter what his appearance suggested. Thor cleared his throat.

"What did you do to me, before?"

"I kissed you," the man said. "Surely you've been kissed before, prince of Asgard."

Thor bristled. That wasn't at all what he meant, but then again, he wasn't entirely sure what he meant at all. What Thor wanted to know was why he was still thinking about it. He wanted to know who this man was. He just wanted to *know*.

"Tell me your name," Thor said.

"Loki."

"And I assume you know mine."

"I do," Loki said.

"How?"

Loki waved his hand, a dismissive gesture. "Never mind that, Thor."

He said Thor's name as if it were a spell, soft and almost song-like.

"You will tell me," Thor said. "You say you know everything about me. I want to know how."

Loki shrugged. "I watched you. I've been watching you for some time."

Thor dismounted his horse, stepping closer to Loki, still taller and much broader than him. Loki did not waver in his spot. He looked completely unafraid.

"But *how*?" Thor demanded.

He wasn't used to being denied answers, not as a prince.

"I am a sorcerer," Loki said, which wasn't explanation enough for Thor, but seemed all Loki was willing to reveal.

"You are Jotun?"

"Yes."

"You are too small to be Jotun," Thor said. After a beat he added, "And not ugly enough."

Loki laughed. He was close enough for Thor to feel his icy breath on his face as he did so. He wondered if Loki was cold. He didn't seem it, but Thor was sure he couldn't have been warm. Not here.

"I am of mixed blood," Loki explained. "Not a true Jotun."

"Why are you-"

"Enough questions," Loki said. "Now it is my turn. Why did you come back?"

Thor hesitated. He wasn't sure, exactly. Curiosity was the driving force, and he wasn't ready to reveal that.

"Perhaps I decided to come back and slay you."

"Seems an awful long journey just to do that," Loki said.

The way he stood, seeming so unafraid of him made Thor wary - Loki was something Thor had never encountered before. Most people were afraid of Thor and what his stature and title meant.

"Who is here with you?" Thor asked.

"No one," Loki said. "I am alone."

He said it in such a way that made Thor sad for him. It was the only time since meeting Loki that Thor heard anything like emotion in his voice.

"Aye," Thor said. "But you are not alone right now."

Loki grinned, red eyes flashing. He kissed Thor again, and this time it did not startle Thor, in fact he was expecting it. He welcomed it. He let Loki touch his tongue with his own, suck it into his mouth. The mix of their breaths - both warm and cold - made for a pleasant sensation. Loki pulled back too quickly for Thor's liking, and he grunted his disapproval, but Loki kept him away with a hand to his sternum, light and sure.

His skin was like Thor's once more, his eyes green.

"How do you do that?" Thor asked.

Loki stared at his own hand, nearly as pale as the snow under his feet. He looked nearly amazed himself by it, and his eyes were almost glowing.

"It's you," Loki said. "As I thought it would be."

Thor frowned. "Stop speaking in riddles."

They watched together as Loki's skin slowly began to fall back to blue, like he was being painted on. Loki's eyes were no longer bright.

"You should return home, Thor," he said. "Before I kill you."

Loki said it calmly enough that Thor did not startle, but his breath still caught in his throat. He had no doubt that he could slay Loki before the sorcerer even got the chance to try, but he was more curious as to why he said it in the first place.

"You are an odd thing," Thor said. "You know who I am, yet you make threats against me?"

"I thought you would appreciate my honesty." Loki pulled his hand away from Thor's sternum, curling it back and hiding under his furs. "I did not mean offense."

"I doubt I can trust a word from your lips," Thor said, and Loki laughed again.

Thor knew he couldn't stay, and realizing it saddened him, made him itch again. He didn't want to leave. Or, more importantly, he didn't want to leave without Loki. But that wasn't an option. Sneaking a Frost Giant, mixed blood or not, into the house of Odin would not be met kindly.

"You have to leave," Loki said, as if he had read Thor's mind.

Thor nodded.

"Before you slay me," he said, and grinned.

He moved to mount his horse, but Loki touched his arm and Thor turned back to look at him. Loki looked regretful, contemplative.

"Would you kiss me again?" he asked.

Thor wasn't sure why he was asking, since he hadn't bothered to do so the previous times, but he was glad Loki mentioned it. He did want to kiss him again. He wanted to map the markings on Loki's Jotun skin with his tongue, see how far they went.

"Aye," Thor said, and brought his lips to Loki's once more, this time cupping a large hand over his jaw, caressing the skin there. For being so cold, it wasn't clammy at all, nor wet, but rather dry and almost refreshing. The longer they kissed, the less cold Loki's skin became, warming as his form took on that of an Aesir.

They pulled away and Thor mounted his horse immediately, readjusting his furs.

"Farewell, Loki," he said, and rode away, not daring to look back.

--

Sif hounded him about his trip when he met her and the Warriors Three back in Alfheim. They were amazed he hadn't been slaughtered, innards strung all over Jotunheim.

"My friends, no Frost Giant dared even come near me," Thor said.

"Remarkable," Fandral said. "Truly."

If Sif was suspicious, she said nothing.

They returned to Asgard with a hefty bounty of slain game, and Thor gave Frigga a rabbit he trapped on their way home as a present.

No one suspected anything, and Thor wanted it that way.

--

Despite a month having passed, Thor did not stop thinking about Loki. He often wondered about him in Jotunheim, alone in the snow and wind. Thor wondered why he didn't just leave, why he stayed in isolation, rather than have company or kinsmen.

He asked Odin about it one night, after his mother had gone to bed, and only they remained in the throne room.

"Tell me more about the Frost Giants," he said.

"Why this sudden curiosity?" Odin asked.

Thor picked at the flaking leather of his boot to avoid meeting his father's eye.

"There is just so little written of them in our records. Why are they so terrible?"

"They would seek to destroy us," Odin said. "The Frost Giants are a more primitive race, knowing only battle. There is no reasoning with them, Thor."

Loki wasn't anything like Odin described. He didn't seem blood thirsty at all, at least not for battle. And primitive was not the word Thor would use to describe him. He seemed regal, sophisticated, almost like a prince. He was one of the most beautiful creatures Thor had ever laid eyes on.

"I hope you are not thinking of going there," Odin said.

Thor looked up.

"No," he said. "I would not defy you in that way, father."

--

But he did go back, just a few days later. He did not want to stay away from Loki any longer, he was all Thor could think about. Enchantment or not, he intrigued Thor in a way no other had, and Thor wanted to see him again.

Sneaking out was not easy. He had to convince Odin to let him join the Warriors Three on a quest, a journey to recover a missing book of history from some particularly greedy trolls. Not a hard quest at all, but Thor insisted that he was restless as of late, and needed to get out.

"It will be good for him," his mother said, and Thor silently praised her.

He lost the Warriors Three just after they headed over the mountains, and rode full speed for Jotunheim.

This time, Loki was waiting for him.

Thor saw him just as he rounded the pass into Jotunheim, a solitary figure in the ice. Thor's blood warmed considerably when he noticed him. Loki remained still as Thor rode towards him, standing without his furs.

"You must be frozen," Thor said as he approached.

He dismounted his horse and closed the distance between he and Loki, a hand on his cheek. Loki closed his eyes, leaning into Thor's touch.

"The cold does not affect me," he said.

Thor caressed the groove of one marking on Loki's cheek. Loki opened his eyes. "Why have you come back, Thor? I told you before that I would kill you."

"My father told me never to trust your kind," Thor said.

He leaned in to kiss Loki, but Loki pulled away from him, turned his head. Thor furrowed his brow, confused.

"Why do you deny me?"

"You think you can take what you want because you are a prince," Loki said.

He was watching Thor's horse as she nuzzled the fresh snow and tried to find something to feed on. Thor wanted to reach out again and touch him, but he hesitated now. He wasn't used to being denied anything.

"But it is alright for you to kiss me whenever you please?"

"You forget what I am," Loki said.

"I do not," Thor said. "I just don't understand."

Loki looked at Thor again. His eyes were glowing as he ran them over Thor's body, studying him, gauging him. Thor wanted to shiver under his gaze, but he wouldn't let himself.

"I did not mean to offend you," Thor said.

"You didn't. Tell me why you have come back."

"Let me kiss you, first."

This time, Loki didn't pull away when Thor touched him, placed his lips on his again. They kissed for a long time, until Thor was starting to feel warm under his furs and afraid he wouldn't be able to stop. They pulled away from each other panting, faces flushed.

"Why do you stay here?" Thor asked, when he finally got his breath back.

"You really don't know?"

Thor shook his head.

"I'm cursed," Loki said. "The runt prince of Laufey, doomed to wander the wastes of Jotunheim for all my wretched existence."

Thor gaped. He knew that name.

"Laufey? The king?"

"Yes," Loki said.

Thor hadn't even known that Laufey had a son. Though written records of Jotunheim were scarce and rather vague, Thor assumed something like that would have been documented. Odin had never told him such a thing. Thor wondered if he even knew. Loki was not just any sorcerer, he was a prince.

"Can you break this curse?" Thor asked.

"Only an Aesir can leave Jotunheim freely. I am not." Loki locked eyes with Thor. "I would have to appear as you do."

"And then? You could leave, then, could you not?" Thor was talking too fast, too excited. He tried to calm himself. "If you appeared as I do, could you leave?"

"Where would I go?" Loki motioned to himself. "The illusion does not last. I would be found."

In that moment, Loki reminded Thor a lot of himself. Maybe the circumstances were different, but they were both stuck in certain places. They couldn't leave without being brought back, without risking death. Thor had already made up his mind.

"Come to Asgard with me," he said.

"Foolish," Loki said. "How could that ever work?"

"If you can work the illusion long enough, I can sneak you into our borders without anyone being

the wiser. No Frost Giant would dare enter the house of Odin. You'd be safe."

For a long moment, Loki did not speak. He seemed to be mulling over Thor's proposition, weighing what Thor had just said - and it was pretty loaded. There was no reason either of them should trust each other, and no reason why Thor should help Loki at all. He certainly wasn't obligated. Loki muttered something to himself, something in a language Thor could not understand but thought sounded like a curse.

"You would risk bringing me into Asgard?"

"I would," Thor said.

That answer seemed enough for Loki, and he stepped closer to Thor once more, practically nuzzled against his body. Thor wrapped an arm around him, covering Loki in his furs even though he knew Loki didn't need it.

"You won't be able to regret this later, young prince," Loki said.

"Nor will you."

Loki kissed Thor again, deeper than he had before, tongue coaxing and searching. After a minute he bit down on Thor's lips hard.

Thor grunted into Loki's mouth, displeased, but didn't move as Loki licked the blood from his lips. Something about it was incredibly erotic, and Thor was tempted to ask Loki to do it again. Loki pulled back an Aesir, the same form Thor had seen many times before.

"This should last until we get to your home," Loki said.

"Your home now, too."

Loki smiled at that.

--

Heimdall watched the gate. It was his duty, and had been for centuries. Sneaking by him was something that was just not done. He was one of the main reasons Asgard remained impenetrable by any enemy. He was also something Thor had not seriously taken into account when asking Loki to come back to Asgard with him. Though the idea to bring Loki back was something Thor fantasized about often, it was just that - a fantasy. He'd never seriously thought it through, and now, as they approached the gate into Asgard, Thor began to panic.

"You've tensed," Loki said from behind.

"Heimdall," Thor said. He sighed heavily. "He is our gatekeeper-"

"I know who he is," Loki said.

He didn't seem worried, which made Thor worry less as well. Around his middle, Loki's arms tightened and then it felt like Loki wasn't there at all, but Thor could still feel him, feel his presence. Thor craned his neck to look behind him.

"Act normal," Loki said. "Tell him you've returned early."

Thor nodded. "Alright."

He couldn't see Loki anymore, it was like he had disappeared entirely. It was thrilling to think about, Loki doing magic the way he did, even if Thor didn't get to see it. He still felt it.

Thor did as Loki told him, and approached Heimdall like normal.

"Odinson," he said. "Why have you returned alone?"

"I grew weary of the quest." Thor grinned. "A lost history book holds no interest for me."

It was an answer Heimdall seemed more than willing to accept, and he stepped aside to let Thor without further question.

"Welcome home," he said, and bowed his head as Thor passed.

Despite Loki still being invisible, Thor moved fast to get them over the bridge. It was night in Asgard still, hardly anyone would be awake to know of Thor's return. When they got to the stables Loki turned visible once again, still in Aesir form. Thor was high on adrenaline, nearly shaking with it. It was a dangerous and risky thing, sneaking Loki in, but they had accomplished it together, and now Loki could stay with Thor as long as they both wished. Thor knew, in the back of his mind, he knew the absurdity of it all. Loki would be found eventually, and there would be severe consequences. But having Loki there with him at that moment made it seem worth it. With his magic, Loki just might be able to conceal himself long enough to not be discovered. Even if he left, he would still be free of Jotunheim, and Thor could see him freely anyway.

They made it to Thor's chambers without incident. It wasn't until Thor shut his door behind them that he allowed himself to breathe easier. He had done it. *They* had done it. Thor removed his over coat and draped it over the table, watching as Loki stepped further into the room.

"These are your chambers," Loki said, gazing around the room. He turned to raise a brow at Thor. "This is practically a throne room."

Thor wilted a bit under Loki's gaze, sheepish. "It has been my room all my life."

"A true prince of Asgard," Loki said, and his voice was not all together kind, but his lips twitched as he spoke.

Thor moved to light the torches, but Loki flicked his wrist and they were suddenly lit, illuminating the room further. Thor stood, wide eyed.

"That is truly amazing," he said.

Loki shrugged, bending a bit to feel the fabric of Thor's bedding between his fingers. He reminded Thor of a cat, curious and wary. Everything of Thor's was new to him, and Thor wondered if Loki had ever even been in a room like this before, or if he'd been in the wastes of Jotunheim so long he'd just forgotten what it was like.

"It is natural to me," Loki said. He slipped off his own overcoat and placed it besides Thor's.

"You must be exhausted," Thor said. "I should fetch you an extra bedroll."

Loki motioned to the bed.

"Why would I not sleep there?"

"Oh," Thor said, and then paused.

"It's big enough for at least four," Loki added.

This hadn't occurred to Thor, either. The plan, he would readily admit, wasn't very well thought out. The idea of Loki in bed with him was thrilling, even if Loki meant it innocently. But with the way Loki looked, all that thin lethal muscle and hypnotic eyes, Thor thought maybe he didn't mean it that way at all. Loki was almost impossible to read.

"Then come," Thor said. "We shall rest."

He stripped down to his tunic and breeches, deciding to leave the bath for tomorrow. Thor crawled into bed and pulled the coverings aside for Loki, whenever he was ready. He was so lost in thought about what to do with Loki now that he had him, he didn't see Loki until he was climbing into the bed.

He was naked, and Thor's mouth dropped in shock. It was the last thing he had expected. In the torchlight, Loki's body was almost glowing, pale skin stretched over bone, and thin like Thor imagined him to be, but still defined in muscle.

"Where are your clothes?" Thor asked stupidly.

"It's too warm," Loki said in way of explanation. He tilted his head a bit, looking dangerous again, like when he'd first threatened Thor's life. "Why, Odinson? Does this make you uncomfortable?"

"No," Thor said, watching shamelessly as Loki situated himself under the bed covers.

He sighed as he settled onto the mattress, suddenly looking very tired. Thor reached over and touched Loki's cheek with the back of his palm, feeling the smooth skin there. The more he thought about it, the more Thor realized how absurd it all was, but he still could not bring himself to regret it.

"Have you enchanted me?" he asked.

Loki's laugh was silent, but shook the bed lightly.

"'Perhaps you've enchanted yourself."

Maybe that was true. Thor would believe almost anything at that point.

"Aye," he said. "Goodnight, Loki."

Loki waved his hand again, snuffing the torchlight and bathing the room in darkness.

"Goodnight," he whispered.

--

Thor woke early and greeted his mother in father in the dining hall to avoid them even thinking about going near his chambers. It was a rare thing that anyone did these days, but Thor wanted to leave nothing to chance.

"Ah," Odin said. "I heard you returned early. Did you miss holding court with me that much?"

"Indeed," Thor said, laughing.

If Odin suspected nothing, then Thor was truly in the clear. He made small talk with his parents for

a few minutes, loading his plate up with food for he and Loki.

"Thor," Frigga said. "You're piling on enough food for four. Or at least Volstagg."

"Food beyond our borders is terrible." Thor grabbed a grape bunch and added it to the plate. "Forgive me if I do not stay, but I'd like to eat in my chambers again."

Odin waved him off, seeming unconcerned.

They bowed to each other and Thor rushed back to his chambers, two plates in hand. When he opened the door Loki was sitting on the bed, dressed once more, hair lightly damp. He must have bathed while Thor was away. He also appeared Jotun once more - the spell must have worn off overnight.

"I've brought you food," Thor said, holding the plate out like an offering.

Loki looked impressed by it, which made Thor beam. He wasn't sure what kind of food Loki would like, or if someone of Frost Giant descent would even be able to eat the same food as he, but Loki didn't appear put off by any of it. He picked a grape off the bunch and slipped it into his mouth, chewing it slowly, discovering it. He must have decided he liked it, because he then ate three more and started picking around the plate for something else.

Thor discovered that Loki liked sweet things. He ate all the fruit on the plate plus the sweet glaze bread. Loki must have been extremely hungry, because he also ate nearly everything else on the plate before Thor remembered to take some for himself.

They ate together on the bed in silence, Thor watching each time Loki brought something to his lips, or licked juice from his fingers.

Thor took a long bath when they were finished, letting himself soak in the hot water, at least two days worth of dirt and grime on him. When he came out Loki was watching him, eyes hungry, like he hadn't just eaten a day's worth of food. Thor was clad only in his towel, but he didn't waver under Loki's gaze. He welcomed it. He wanted it.

Loki moved towards him in calculated, graceful movements, until he was nearly pressed against Thor. He brought both hands up and placed them against Thor's chest, spreading his fingers out.

"I enjoy the warmth of your skin," Loki said.

It was cold, goose bumps rose over Thor's skin, but he didn't move Loki's hands. He was so unlike anything Thor had ever experienced or ever expected, and he couldn't stop being amazed by it. Loki moved almost the way an Aesir did, regal and dreamlike. Thor could see no monster. He just couldn't.

He placed a kiss to Loki's brow, and Loki pressed his lips to Thor's ear.

"Let me taste your blood again."

Thor ran his tongue over the closed cut on his lip, still a bit tender from the first bite.

"No," Loki said. "This way."

He grabbed Thor's right hand and pulled it to his mouth, singling out his index finger. He didn't ask for Thor's permission, not expressly, but Thor was more than willing to give it. Loki pulled a knife from his belt and sliced open Thor's finger, quick and clean. Thor hissed, but went immediately

silent as Loki sucked the digit into his mouth, much like he had the food from earlier. Now Thor just stared. His groin tightened and he started to wonder just how much he could get away with when it came to Loki.

Loki sucked the blood from his finger until it felt raw before pulling away, appearing Aesir once more, eyes glowing bright green. They dimmed as he stepped away from Thor.

He looked like something Thor wanted to keep, and that terrified him a bit, the thought of needing, of wanting something so much you were willing to risk anything.

Thor had to leave to attend to political matters, but when he returned the afternoon Loki was still Aesir, and then later that evening, when Thor brought them dinner, Loki still maintained his form.

"Will it last forever now?" Thor asked.

They were eating on the bed again, plates of food piled on the mattress. Thor discovered at lunch that even if Loki didn't have the physical appearance of a giant, he still ate like one. Loki's appetite might not have surpassed Volstagg's, but it was a close thing.

"No," Loki said, staring down at his potatoes. "It's not enough."

As he said it, his skin started to fade to blue. Sitting closer to him now, Thor got to see the disappointment in Loki's eyes as he became more Jotun, the way his jaw tightened unfavorably. Loki hated himself in this form, Thor realized. Having been abandoned by his own kin, he could see why.

"You are beautiful," Thor said.

Loki gave Thor a look that could only have been interpreted as a glare, disbelief in his eyes.

"Humor is not your strong suit, Odinson," he said.

"No," Thor said. "I mean it. You are beautiful, Loki."

"Stop."

Loki stood from the bed, leaving his plate unfinished. Thor frowned and stood with him, following as Loki moved to the adjoining washroom. Loki scowled at him for doing so.

"Why are you following me?"

"I've upset you."

"No." Loki held the door, waiting to shut it. "I wish to be alone."

"I meant to compliment you," Thor said.

"Enough," Loki said. "That was no compliment to me."

His voice tight and final, so Thor let it go for now, allowing Loki to shut the washroom door. He cursed himself all through the night, waiting for Loki to come out, and eventually fell asleep fully clothed. When Thor awoke the next morning, the door was still closed, but someone had covered Thor in a sheet during the night.

--

The Warriors Three managed to drag Thor away from Loki when they caught him in the kitchens a few days later. He was stealing more food for Loki, who had become particularly fond of strawberries and cream, when Fandral practically dragged him out by the hair.

"You've been hiding away from us for days, now! Didn't even say hello when we got back from our quest, which was successful, by the way."

"My apologies," Thor said. "I've been...occupied."

"And eating for four, by the looks of it." Fandral jabbed playfully as Thor's side. "You need to keep exercising or else your girth will match Volstagg's."

For a moment, all Thor could do was frown at his own figure until he remembered he wasn't actually consuming all this food. It was true that he hadn't trained properly in a few days, but he also didn't want to leave Loki for too long. He was no longer angry at Thor for calling him beautiful in his Jotun form, but hadn't asked for any more of Thor's blood since. Kissing, however, was not off limits. So Thor was rather reluctant to leave. He worried about Loki, as well. Sometimes in the night he would wake with the feeling of eyes on him and realize that Loki was watching him, considering him. Thor wasn't sure what to make of it.

"I will remember to train, my friend," he said. "Thank you."

Only Fandral didn't let him leave.

"Spar with us for but a few hours, Thor, please."

He felt guilty enough to agree to it, and also thought it would be a wise thing to do if he were to avoid suspicion. Of course, Thor had not gone rusty at all, and he took down both Fandral and Hogun easily during their spar, then watched as they both took on Volstagg.

An hour into sparring he noticed a crow perched on the outer wall. A strange thing for Asgard. Hogun said so.

"It is indeed," Thor said.

The crow stayed almost the entire time, watching them all carefully, but mostly Thor. As Thor glanced back at the crow again and again, he realized that its eyes were red. Part of Thor panicked, the other was incredibly impressed.

"My friends," he said. "I think it is time for me to stop. I have other obligations."

"Fine, fine," Volstagg said. "But watch that appetite of yours, yes?"

"Look who's talking," Hogun said.

Thor left them laughing, and the crow followed.

--

Once Thor shut the door to his chambers, the crow shifted back into Loki, as Thor thought it might.

"Very impressive," he said.

"I was wondering where you had gone to," Loki said, dusting off his clothing a bit. "I thought you

were getting us food."

"I tried, but Fandral interrupted me. I hadn't seen them in days." Thor looked up at Loki, suddenly realizing something. "How is it you can keep the shape of a crow for so long, but not an Aesir?"

Loki was picking around Thor's dresser like he was looking for some left over snack.

"As an animal I am simply shifting my shape," he explained. "But to appear as another god, now that takes more effort."

Loki pulled an apple from behind the dresser, and Thor wondered if he had stored it there. The thought was rather amusing. Thor had so many more questions for Loki, now. Anytime Thor felt he uncovered one layer of Loki, another sprung up.

"What will you do," he said. "To keep the form of an Aesir?"

"The more blood I take, the longer it lasts," Loki said, biting fiercely into the apple. "I would have to take it all to keep it forever."

They stared at each other, both gauging the other, waiting for a reaction. When Thor said nothing, Loki continued.

"Of course, not just any Aesir blood will do. It has to be noble, and young."

Thor still said nothing, just stood there silent, watching. Loki didn't like that at all, and his face grew darker, tone more biting. He tossed the apple away.

"A king's blood is the only blood strong enough to sustain this form," he said. "Do you understand? I mean to kill you."

Thor didn't move. "Then why haven't you."

Loki's eyes flashed.

"Perhaps I've been biding my time."

"Or perhaps," Thor said. "You cannot go through with it."

Fast as light, Loki had a blade against Thor's throat. He growled.

"You forget I am of Jotun blood, a monster."

"I see no monster." The blade was cold against Thor's throat, but he pushed against it, angling closer to Loki. "You don't want to harm me, Loki."

He closed a hand over Loki's wrist, the one that held the blade so close to his jugular, ready to slice him open. Thor would be lying if he said he wasn't afraid in this moment, but he didn't let it show.

"Do not presume to know my intentions," Loki said. His voice was dark, malicious. "I could slay you now, if I so wished."

"Yet you hesitate."

Thor didn't let Loki answer. He pressed his lips to Loki's, despite the blade still at his throat. The kiss was a bold thing, especially with Loki in the mood that he was in, but he didn't regret it once Loki kissed back, his tongue running over Thor's teeth. His grip on the blade loosened enough so

that Thor was able to push it away entirely, and it dropped to the floor with a light clang, but Thor didn't hear it at all.

He pushed until Loki was yielding to him, his wrist still trapped in Thor's grip.

"You won't harm me," Thor repeated, and kissed Loki again.

And then, as if rising to the challenge, Loki's blade was suddenly back in his hand, pressed into Thor's chest.

It took Thor a moment to grasp it, to realize that Loki had actually stabbed him, but he saw the blood running over Loki's hand, a brilliant red, and then the pain registered. Thor didn't move at first, he couldn't. He just let the shock of it wash over him, the realization of what Loki had done. He had known Loki's plan all along, but Thor didn't actually think Loki would go through with it.

Before him, Loki looked almost shocked at his own actions, watching as Thor's blood spilled out between them, staining his clothes and seeping onto the floor. He pulled his blade out and Thor grunted, feeling as more blood rushed forward from the wound. He collapsed forward onto Loki, breathing harshly. Thor could have gotten up, probably, yelled for help. He could have slain Loki as well and let them both die. But he didn't.

Thor stared at Loki, saw the change in his eyes, from malice to terror. Then confusion. And then all went black.

--

He dreamt he was drowning in an endless ocean. The ocean was on fire, and he could not rise to the surface without burning, and he could not stay underneath the water without swallowing it. Thor shut his eyes against the blur of salt water, his limbs heavy at his sides.

Just as he thought he would perish, someone reached down for him, their arms around his, and pulled him to safety.

--

Thor woke in his bed.

He was alive.

In fact, he was in no pain at all.

Thor brought his hand to his chest immediately, feeling for a wound. There was nothing, though the skin felt slightly tender, there was no suggestion that a knife had cut him in any way. He still felt weakened, though, and incredibly thirsty.

Like a flash of lightning, Thor remembered Loki.

Loki had stabbed him, he'd tried to *kill* him. Thor glanced around the room, panic gripping him – perhaps Loki had left? But he saw that he was still there, standing in the corner looking unsure. Thor had never seen Loki look that way before. He was watching Thor, and looked like he had been for some time.

"What did you do?" Thor asked.

"I stabbed you."

"Then what?"

Loki swallowed. "Then I healed you."

Thor sat up with some effort, propping himself against the pillows.

"Why did you heal me? You had me where you wanted me, right within your grasp. You could be far away from here by now, forever an Aesir."

Loki broke Thor's gaze, staring down at the floor. He looked so conflicted that Thor couldn't help feeling a little bad for him, whether he'd stabbed Thor or not. He'd still saved his life after.

"I changed my mind," Loki said.

"You are a liar. Tell me why."

Thor wasn't entirely sure he knew, but he thought he did, and he wanted to hear Loki say it. He needed to.

Loki finally looked back up at Thor.

"I cannot kill you," he said.

"Come here," Thor said, and Loki did, sat down on the bed next to Thor but cast his eyes downward again. "Look at me."

Loki did, and Thor kissed him. Loki made a surprised sound in his throat that Thor swallowed down, and then Loki pushed his tongue into Thor's mouth like he was searching for some sort of answer.

"You care too much for me to kill me," Thor said, pulling away breathless. "You've ruined your own plan."

Loki shook his head. "No, I-"

Thor kissed him again. He didn't want to hear Loki speak if it was going to be another lie. He pulled until Loki's body was draped over top of his, Loki being careful to avoid his freshly healed wound. In this position, their crotches rubbed together, and Thor could do nothing but want. He felt Loki's body warm as he changed form again, skin paling.

"Do you think I did not know?" Thor looked into Loki's eyes and realized that maybe he didn't, and that saddened him. "I've known for some time."

Loki looked ready to struggle, to pull away from Thor at having his pride wounded like that, but Thor wasn't about to let him go. He kissed Loki with absolute desperation, pushing their bodies closer. Loki was still against him at first, and then it was like something snapped inside him. He moved over Thor like a predator, aggressive and sure. Loki took what he wanted the way Thor expected him to - he pinned Thor to the bed with his weight, kissing and biting until it wasn't enough anymore. Thor realized that Loki was angry, at Thor, at himself too, probably, for not being able to kill him. So he could ruin him another way then, and Thor was okay with that. He wanted to be ruined, maybe he already was.

Loki slid down the length of Thor's body like a feline, back arched as he pulled at the ties on Thor's

breeches, his now warm fingers searching. Thor was already hard when Loki pulled him free, and he was aching for it, for Loki to keep touching him.

"Loki," he said. "You don't have to-"

"Be silent."

Loki's eyes flickered in warning, and then he took Thor in his mouth, as far in as he could.

Thor practically shot off the bed. The sensation of Loki's mouth around his cock was all wet suction, cool at first, then warming. Loki's hands splayed over Thor's stomach, flexing around the muscle, searching. Thor reached out to grab them, but ended up getting a fistful of Loki's hair instead, guiding him. He half expected Loki to stop at Thor touching him that way, but it seemed to encourage him, and he made a pleased noise around Thor's cock, moving almost all the way off to tongue the slit and get a taste of the fluid there.

Thor tried to say his name but choked on it, his skin tense and ticklish where Loki's fingers touched him. He couldn't remember the last time he felt this good, and he didn't want it to stop. Thor lost himself when Loki full out moaned around him, his whole mouth a vibration. He came hard, hips bucking, and could feel where his cock touched the back of Loki's throat. Loki took it all in unfazed, waiting until Thor was finished before pulling away and swallowing.

It took Thor a minute to get his breathing back properly, he felt totally exhausted despite having done almost nothing. Loki was perched on his haunches, wiping at his mouth. Looking like this, like an Aesir, Thor could see the flush on his skin, moving from his neck all the way up to his cheekbones. He was hard, too, and Thor wanted to do something for him, but when he sat up and reached forward, Loki pushed him away.

"I don't wish for your pity," he said.

Loki tried to move from the bed, but Thor seized him by the wrist, holding him in place. When Loki struggled to pull from his grip, Thor pulled him forward until he was sprawled out over Thor's lap, snarling and feral looking.

"Release me or I will slice your throat," Loki hissed, and Thor just laughed.

"An empty threat, as I now know."

That only made Loki angrier, and he raised his free hand as if to call upon magic, but Thor silenced him with his next words, what he'd meant to say before but hadn't had the chance to do.

"I care for you, too," he said, and that caused Loki to finally still. "Why else would I risk bringing you here?"

For a moment, Loki did not answer, just watched Thor carefully, trying to read him.

"Because you are a fool," he said finally, voice whisper soft.

"That as well," Thor said.

He moved slowly, carefully, asking for permission, which Loki gave silently, letting Thor palm him through his breeches. Loki's head fell forward against Thor's neck, his breath hot and uneven in his ear as Thor unfastened the ties and slid a hand inside. Thor wanted to give, and Loki was eager to take and very responsive, thrusting his hips forward slowly as Thor stroked him, one wrist still trapped in Thor's iron grip. He whimpered at one point, when Thor's angle was just right, and

bit down on the salty skin of Thor's neck to muffle it.

It was a near silent affair, and Loki came with a shudder, spilling over into Thor's hand and Thor stroked him right through it, until Loki hissed with oversensitivity and pulled away, distancing himself once more.

Loki stripped down until he was naked, kicking his soiled clothes to the side.

"I need a bath," he said, "if you'd like to join me."

Thor nodded, rising from the bed. He could feel the way things were different between them now, still curious and dangerous, but they were starting to be able to name what they were feeling, as opposed to just grabbing violently at each other, hoping for some sort of understanding.

They slept tucked together in Thor's bed that night, two bodies almost appearing as one.

--

Things did not change much for the next day or so. Thor made time to train with Sif and the Warriors Three, as well as attending to political matters with his father. He didn't want to give them any cause to suspect something might be off about him, though his mother seemed to notice anyway.

"You seem unburdened as of late," she said one morning, running her fingers through Thor's hair. "What makes you so happy, my son?"

"I merely am," Thor said, and felt guilty for lying to her, but it was necessary, wasn't it? He couldn't tell her that he had brought Loki, a creature of Jotun descent into their kingdom, had disobeyed his father's direct orders.

Loki took to reading the books that lay untouched in Thor's chambers. His mother had given them to him in the hopes he would enjoy them, but Thor was never one for reading. At night, Loki stroked Thor until he begged for release, until Loki finally took him in his mouth and let him spill there.

A week later, Odin summoned Thor before him.

"My son," he said, embracing Thor as he entered.

"Father." Thor pulled away to bow. "What need do you have of me?"

"You've been so busy as of late, I only wanted to see you in the flesh once again."

Odin put a hand on Thor's chin to see him better, smiling. Thor felt that guilt again, and the anger rise inside him. It wasn't fair at all.

"I am sorry," he said.

"You have nothing to apologize for."

Odin released him to take a seat on the throne, muscles groaning and bones popping as he did so. Thor stood to stand beside him, one hand on his father's shoulder. The silence was uncomfortable for him, and he meant to ask Odin what else he wanted, when his father spoke again.

"You are becoming more a man every day," he said. "Soon you'll be the one to sit upon this throne,

not I."

"Father, please." Thor frowned. "You are still a great king."

"I am an old king. The truth is you will take over one day, as I have always planned." Odin reached up to cover Thor's hand on his shoulder. "You should think about who you want to rule beside you."

At one time his life, Thor had thought of Sif. She was a strong woman, often kept Thor on his feet and stopped him from making stupid decisions, but now Thor's mind immediately went to Loki. He wanted him by his side. The thought of not having Loki there with him was...upsetting. Thor shifted, realizing he had not yet answered.

"Aye, father," he said. "I will consider it and let you know."

Odin watched him. "You will be a fine king, Thor. I am proud to name you my successor. But a fine king needs an equally fine queen beside him."

--

Loki knew Thor was upset the moment he came in. It wasn't hard to tell, the way he held himself, shoulders tight and drawn downward. Thor looked ready to slay something. He felt ready to, as well.

"Tell me what angers you."

"My father," Thor said. "He wants me to choose a wife."

Loki circled Thor slowly, waiting for him to spill more information, but Thor didn't speak, only clenched his jaw tighter.

"Now?" Loki asked.

"Nay, but soon. I will be king one day, after all."

Reaching upwards, Loki traced the line of Thor's jaw and then down his neck to the place where he had stabbed Thor before. He pressed on the spot where the wound should have been.

"And who will you choose?"

"I do not want..." Thor trailed off, huffing much like a child and not a future king. He didn't want to say it. He was sure Loki already knew. "I do not wish to choose any Asgardian woman."

"You are a stupid thing," Loki said, looking up at him.

Thor frowned. He grabbed Loki's wrist and pulled it away from his chest, glaring at him.

"Why do you say this? I thought you would share my reservations."

Loki wiggled out of his grip.

"I cannot stay in this room all my life," he said. "Nor can you renounce the throne to Asgard."

"Yes," Thor said. "I know."

It was just something he didn't want to think about it, not yet. It didn't help, having Loki in his room for so long now, to think about the realities of his life. He did want to choose someone to rule by his side, but he already had. Thor straightened.

"There is another way."

"How?"

"Bind yourself to me."

The shock on Loki's face was heartbreaking, and quickly turned to anger.

"Do not say things you don't mean."

"I would not dare," Thor said. "If you are bound to me, then you can be my consort, and no one, not even my father can force you to leave. It is law."

"I doubt the law would matter. Your father would kill me." But Loki didn't dismiss the idea at all. He stepped closer to Thor, intrigued.

"I wouldn't let him," Thor said. "I want you by my side at the throne. My mind is made up."

Loki grinned, his eyes glowing as he wrapped his arms around Thor's neck, much like a snake would. He had been waiting for Thor to come and say it, so he could hear it from his own lips.

"You want to make me yours," he said. "And keep me with you."

"Yes."

"And what makes you think," Loki said, voice dropped to a whisper, "that I want to be taken by you?"

Thor slid a hand onto Loki's waist and pulled him close against him, so close that their breaths mingled and their bones nearly cracked together.

"If I am wrong, then you may leave me now, and go wherever you please."

And then Thor pulled back, letting the decision fall entirely to Loki, making it entirely his call. Thor knew what he wanted for himself, but he wanted to hear Loki voice his own want. For a moment, the only thing on Loki's face was surprise. His stance was still so proud and defiant, but then he changed all at once, like he was impressed by Thor calling his bluff. Turned on by it, even.

He shot forward, quick as anything, crowding into Thor's space and kissing him, all tongue and teeth.

"You are not wrong," he said, in between breaks for air. "I want it, *I want it*."

Loki's words, the sound of his voice, the utter want dripping from his lips, made Thor groan and his body burn. He kissed Loki deeper, arms wrapped tight around his waist and nearly bending him back, trying to taste every part of his mouth like he hadn't ever done so before. They struggled to make it to the bed without falling or tripping over one another, and Thor ended up picking Loki up with one strong arm and practically throwing him on it before following. Loki growled and pulled him flush against him by his tunic, then began tugging at the fabric to get it off.

"You are so eager," Thor breathed, and then Loki ripped the fabric of his tunic off as if to prove the point.

The thing Loki didn't seem eager to do was talk. He latched onto Thor's neck with his mouth, kissing downwards over his collar bone until he could lick at his nipples, holding Thor in place with his legs wrapped around him. He was hungry for Thor's skin, for the taste of it. He was absolutely obsessed with it.

Thor managed to pry Loki off of him long enough to get rid of Loki's tunic, and then pulled at his breeches until they slid off his hips. When they were both naked, Thor pressed himself down against Loki just to feel him against him, all of him. This is what he wanted, and for as long as he could have it, he would keep Loki with him. He hoped it could be forever.

There was a tense moment, as Thor was pulling back up, when he and Loki caught each other's eyes and just stared. There was still a lot left unsaid between them, but Thor wasn't very good with words and Loki was perhaps *too* good with them, so they stayed silent, calm for a moment.

Loki reached up and pressed a finger against Thor's brow, traced it with his finger.

"If I were full Jotun, you wouldn't even be able to touch me," he said. "I would burn your skin right off."

Thor opened his mouth to say something and found he couldn't. Loki pulled his hand back, face dark. He was upset, but Thor could see it wasn't at him. And then all at once, Loki flipped onto his stomach, exposing his backside.

"Come on then," he said. "Take me."

Thor touched Loki's back. His skin was pale and unblemished, but Thor would have taken him either way, Jotun or Aesir. It honestly didn't matter to Thor. What mattered was the fact that Loki looked upon himself like something less than Thor. It made Thor furious.

"No," he said.

He rolled Loki so he was on his back again, holding him there with a hand on his sternum. Loki looked utterly confused, confidence lost once again.

"I would look upon you while we do this," Thor said. "Why do you insist on degrading yourself, Loki?"

Loki laughed at him.

"Why do you insist on pretending you don't know what I am?"

"I know what you are," Thor said. He caressed the skin of Loki's chest, which was burning hot and heaving. "And that is exactly why I want you."

Loki opened his mouth and said nothing for the first time since Thor had known him. It occurred to Thor right then that maybe he was the only person Loki had ever met in his life that didn't immediately hate or fear him. It made something in his chest give way, like Loki was stabbing him all over again.

Thor kissed Loki because he didn't know what else to do. He kissed the shock right off his face, rubbing himself against Loki, relishing in the moan Loki let out from the back of his throat. Thor grabbed the meat of Loki's thigh and held his leg open, pushing himself further between Loki's thighs, their cocks touching. Loki grabbed at Thor's hair and pulled hard, then pulled at his own, trying to get control and finding himself unable to.

"Enough," he said.

Thor shook his head, biting at Loki's nipple, thrusting against him until Loki was an absolute mess, shivering under him.

"Stop," Loki said, voice wrecked. "I'll spill."

At that, Thor did stop, forcing himself to still. Any longer and he would have come as well. It was just so hard to control himself with Loki. He reached blindly for his bedside table and grappled in the drawer for some oil, nearly spilling it as he pulled it out. He placed it on the bed and dipped two fingers in, coating them. Thor was more than familiar with the preparation. He'd taken many lovers, male and female, over the years. Loki shifted his hips a bit, spreading his legs more for Thor, watching. For a moment, Thor paused and wondered if Loki, in all his years in the wastes, had ever been with anyone before. He doubted that Loki would tell him if he asked, in fact, he'd probably be offended. If Loki was nervous at all, he didn't show it, cock hard and wet against his abs. He looked impatient.

Thor traced the rim of his hole and then pressed a finger in. It was tight and hot and Thor wanted to pull out and take Loki right then, but knew what a terrible idea that was. Loki seemed calm enough, trusting him enough that he loosened fairly quickly for a second finger, legs twitching where they were spread around Thor's hips.

Loki gripped Thor's shoulders and used him as leverage to push down against his fingers, trying to pull them deeper.

"Another," he said, squeezing Thor's shoulders until it was painful. "I do not like to be kept waiting."

Thor laughed but obeyed, slipped in a third finger and it was still so tight, but Loki seemed to enjoy it, the slight burn of it, and he shut his eyes and exposed his neck. Thor leaned forward to bite it, and the angle pushed his fingers deeper and Loki jerked almost violently underneath him. He clawed at Thor's back, goading him, and Thor took the bait. Loki liked to push to see just how far people would go, and Thor was willing to go pretty far. He fingered him roughly, oil dripping between them, his mouth still attached to Loki's neck, leaving a deep purple bruise in its wake.

And then Loki pushed Thor away, his fingers slipping free. They were both breathing heavily, flushed and aroused.

"What-" Thor tried.

"I want you inside," Loki said. "Now."

Thor liked the way Loki demanded things from him. He wasn't afraid to tell Thor what he wanted.

Thor scrambled for the oil and coated himself, and Loki rested his legs over Thor's shoulder and waited. He pushed in slow, afraid he'd spill if he went too fast or worse, hurt Loki, but he was so tight around him, almost burning hot, and Thor lost control once more.

"Loki," he breathed, thrusting the rest of the way in, flush against Loki's ass. It took a minute before he could actually move, arms on either side of Loki's head, caging him in. Loki kissed him, opened mouthed, and Thor fucked into him, slow at first, and then he started to lose himself and pick up speed. He was almost startled by his own want, and Loki was eager underneath him, pushing his hips up and demanding he go faster, harder.

When Loki said his name, it sounded like nothing Thor had ever heard before. It made him want to

lose everything, give himself to Loki completely. He wanted to fall. Thor felt like Loki was taking *him,* not the other way around.

"Thor," Loki said again. "Plea - I want you to -"

He was trying not to beg, but Thor wanted to hear him say it, to know that he had ruined Loki as much as he'd ruined him.

"I cannot hear you," he said, breathing roughly. "What do you want?"

Loki clenched down on him and Thor nearly sobbed, stuttering in his pace, but he picked up again soon enough. He shifted forward until Loki was bent almost in half, cock trapped between them. He opened his mouth like he was going to scream and Thor clamped a hand over it, nipped Loki's ear gently. He drove himself into Loki like he wasn't ever planning to leave, still holding his mouth closed until Loki pulled his hair again.

"Touch me," Loki said, when Thor removed his hand and Thor acted like he hadn't heard him at all, still thrusting wildly, unforgiving. Loki bit his lip until it split open and bled, head thrashing.

"*Please*," he blurted, exhaling sharply. "Touch me, damn you. Touch me or I will turn your bed into ice and -"

Thor didn't give him the chance to finish. He put a hand between them and stroked Loki's cock with a firm grip. Loki choked on his words and Thor kissed him and tasted the blood on his lips. It tasted sweet.

Loki came first, spilling between them, clenching down without meaning to, or maybe he did, and Thor started to lose his rhythm and felt himself tipping over the edge.

"Come for me," Loki said. His voice was a hiss in Thor's ear, a tempting whisper. "Thor."

It was like he cast a spell. Thor came inside Loki, hips snapping forward so hard the bed collided with the wall. Loki held him through it, his hands a soothing presence on Thor's lower back, trailing down to caress the meat of his ass. Thor lost mobility again, bones heavy and unwilling to move. He lay there until Loki squirmed under him, and even then he didn't want to move. Loki placed his hands over Thor's shoulders and they glowed green a moment before Loki pushed Thor off of him and onto the other side of the bed.

"You giant oaf," Loki said, though spent and still panting, he wasn't very threatening.

Thor was giddy, there was no other word for it. He watched Loki as he stretched out across the bed, on his stomach now, hair falling around his face. He looked so undone, and Thor rather liked him that way.

"You're all right?" he asked.

Loki nodded. "I am fine. Merely tired...and messy."

Thor rolled closer to him, watching as Loki shut his eyes to rest. They would bathe soon, and then eventually, Thor would bring Loki before his father, and present him as his choice for a consort. He would give Loki his blood every day if he needed to, just to keep Loki looking Aesir, as if that would help sway his father. But there was no going back now.

Thor reached out and touched Loki's face, traced the sharp edge of his cheekbone.

"What is it," Loki said, eyes fluttering open.

"You are mine now."

Loki smiled, barely, and shook his head.

"No, now you are mine."

--

Thor knew something was wrong the moment he went to grab breakfast for himself and Loki. Odin wasn't in the dining hall. Only Frigga.

"Where is father?"

"Summoned by Heimdall," Frigga said. "Something of urgency, he said."

Thor nearly ran to his chambers.

--

Loki didn't startle when Thor came rushing in, but he looked like he already knew something was wrong. He stood from the bed, hands tight at his sides.

"What is it?"

"I think my father knows," Thor said, and was afraid to look up at Loki.

He thought for a moment, that maybe there was still time, or that Odin did not know. Maybe he and Loki could leave together, or face Odin before he found out. But that illusion shattered quickly at the force of Odin's fist banging on Thor's door.

"*Thor!*"

His voice was terrifying, shaking the very foundation of the room. Thor could hear the guards outside, and the next instant Odin broke the door down, dressed in full armor. He pointed to Loki, who stood placid in the center of the room.

"Kill him."

"Father, no!"

Two guards reached to hold Thor back and he tore right through them, reaching the next guard just as he swung his sword into Loki.

"Do not-!"

Loki disappeared.

There was silence for a moment, a tense air in the room as the guards looked around, dumbfounded, trying to figure out what had happened. Thor was never more thankful for Loki's magic.

Odin swore. "He's still in Asgard. I want him found and brought to me."

Thor was shaking with anger, but he wilted some under his father's gaze. Odin pointed at him much the way he had at Loki just moments ago.

"You," he snarled. "Come with me. *Now*."

--

There was a reason Odin had been unchallenged as king for so long. He was a terrifying man when he wanted to be, and now was no exception. He positively seethed anger, holding Thor's arm like a scolded child while they entered the throne room. He sent all the guards out and instructed them to make sure no one entered.

Thor was almost certain he was going to strike him, but when Odin turned around to face him, he looked more tired than anything.

"Father," Thor tried.

Odin held a hand up to silence him.

"Do you have any idea what you have done?" Odin shook his head. "No, of course you don't."

Thor swallowed and let him continue, staring down at the floor.

"Heimdall suspected something amiss with you from the beginning, but would not give watch into your chamber."

Thor bristled. "Is that how you knew? He told you? Why would he -"

"Because I commanded him to, and I'm glad I did."

It didn't look good. Thor *knew*, it didn't look good. It wasn't at all, but if he could just explain to his father who Loki was, why he had done it, he hoped Odin would understand. Odin had no idea Loki was Laufey's son, and now that Loki had given himself to Thor, agreed to be with him, they could perhaps reconcile things between them.

"Father, allow me to explain. Loki is -"

"I know what Loki is," Odin said. "I know who he is."

Thor looked up sharply. "How?"

Odin didn't answer at first. He looked reserved about revealing anything, but Thor knew now that Odin knew something Thor did not.

"The Elves told me, long ago. A prophecy."

There was noise from outside the throne room, the march of guards as they searched the palace for Loki.

"What prophecy," Thor said. Clipped. Careful.

"A prophecy that one day a Jotun of mixed blood, a master of magic, would come into this house and make it fall. Do you see what you have done?!"

Thor stepped close to Odin, suddenly less afraid of him. He was mostly furious right now.

"You knew this and didn't tell me?"

"I was trying to protect you."

"You lied to me, if you had only told me -"

"You would have gone off anyway."

"Father, listen to yourself. Loki is not here to break apart our bloodline."

Neither of them was listening to the other. Odin was only seeing what he wanted to see in Loki, and Thor did not understand why Odin would even believe such a prophecy. Nothing was making sense anymore.

"He is a *Jotun*, Thor, even if he is only half blood. They would do so in a heartbeat."

"How do you know? How are you so sure?"

Odin's face darkened.

"Because I brought this upon us."

Thor didn't move. He kept his eyes on his father, trying to find some answer in him.

"How do you mean?"

Odin turned away from Thor with a sigh, moving slowly toward the throne before taking a seat. He rested his face in his open palm, looking tired and old. For the first time, Thor noticed that he looked almost afraid.

"Long ago," Odin began, lifting his head, "in ancient times when we were warring with Jotunheim, I had the Elves place a curse upon Laufey, to produce an heir of mixed blood and end his reign. Laufey is a proud god, he would never allow a mixed blood to take the throne."

"But how did you accomplish this?"

"A dying sorcerer was sent by the elves to breach the walls of Jotunheim. I knew Laufey, in all his cruelty, would eat him. That is how the seed was planted. But in turn, he also turned the curse on me. That same heir would come back and end mine. Do you see now? Loki is that heir. It's been written in the stars for a thousand years."

"Loki is..." Thor swallowed. "Does he know of this?"

"He must," Odin said. "That can be the only reason he is here now."

Thor wasn't sure how much of that he believed. He wasn't sure what to believe at all anymore. His father had lied to him, and Loki as well. It was impossible to know who was telling him the truth at all. Thor bowed his head, feeling heavy, betrayed. He was angry and hurt, but didn't know who to be angry at. Both of them, maybe.

"I don't understand this," Thor said. "Loki hates his father. He couldn't even leave Jotunheim without my help."

"You foolish boy. Of course he could, but he needed your help to sneak into our kingdom."

Loki had lied to him again, and Thor didn't know why he was still surprised by it. He touched the

part of his chest where Loki had stabbed him, where his wound would have been had Loki not healed him.

"Why would he have not struck sooner, then? He's been here for weeks, father, and has done nothing against you."

"Perhaps he was waiting for the right moment," Odin said. "It doesn't matter, Thor. What matters is that we must kill him before can strike us down."

"No."

Odin tightened.

"What did you say?"

"I cannot kill him," Thor said. "And I won't allow anyone else to either. He is bound to me, father, and I to him."

Odin stood again, rushing towards Thor, gripping him by the shoulders and shaking him violently. He looked ready to strike him down himself, and Thor readied himself for the blow but it never came. Instead he saw Odin looking at him like he'd been the one who failed Thor.

"You are still so much a boy," he said, and rested his hand on Thor's cheek as if to comfort him.

Thor frowned. "Father..."

"Go to your chambers," Odin said. "I must clean up this mess."

"I won't allow you to kill him."

"It is not up to you." Odin moved his hand from Thor's cheek. "Now go."

--

The guards did not find Loki, and Thor knew they wouldn't. For all Thor knew, Loki had escaped and was somewhere else. He hoped he wasn't, though. He wanted to see him again. He wanted to touch him, and he wanted answers. What were Loki's true intentions?

Thor remained in his chambers under Odin's orders, with guards posted outside his door. It was a miracle he didn't keep them *in* Thor's room, in case Loki found a way in. Heimdall would be watching though, and the minute Loki turned up, he would alert Odin to him.

Thor was brought food but barely ate, could hardly do anything the whole night and next day, his mind racing with thoughts he couldn't keep in. He wondered what Sif knew, or the Warriors Three, and what they thought of him now.

Frigga came to see him in the morning, her eyes already full of forgiveness.

"You could not have known," she said, and held Thor against her breast.

Thor wanted to be furious at her to, for also knowing and not saying a thing, but he just couldn't be. He felt like a child again in her arms.

It was on the third day, just past midnight, when Loki returned. Thor felt him before he saw him, jerking awake to see Loki standing beside his bed, watching him. Thor's first instinct was to tell

him to flee, to protect himself rather than get answers from him.

"Heimdall will know you are here." Thor touched Loki's hand and found it freezing, colder than he could ever remember his Jotun skin being. "Loki, you must leave."

"I have clouded this room," Loki said. "I am still a master of magic, if you recall."

Thor sat up, searching out Loki's red eyes in the darkness. There was no sound from outside his door, so no one knew as of yet that he was there. Thor let go of Loki's hand and pulled it back, trying to warm it again under his covers. He hadn't forgotten what his father told him.

"You lied to me."

"I've lied to everyone."

Loki stepped forward as if he planned to sit on the bed, and Thor didn't stop him. Loki sat next to him, close but not touching him, and Thor found himself disappointed. Despite everything, Thor still wanted him. Still craved his touch.

"Did you come here to destroy my father's reign?"

"Aye."

Thor already knew that was true, even if some stupid part of him pretended it wasn't.

"Your father sent you?" he asked.

"My father hates me," Loki said, and Thor knew that he would never be able to understand what Loki had gone through, being alone for so long, hated by everyone, and in turn hating yourself. "He sent me to live in the wastes, dangling freedom in front of me. I could have gone home if I'd only killed you both. Home a hero, no longer an outcast. I am still the prince, after all."

"But as an Aesir? Your kin would-"

"My *kin* would bow to me as their future king. My father would have rule over Asgard and Jotunheim, and so would I. My mixed blood wouldn't even matter."

And all that, all that just to be accepted by someone. But Thor already accepted Loki for who he was and who he wasn't, he'd proven that, and Loki hadn't expected him to.

Thor stared into the darkness. He didn't know what the solution was supposed to be, now. He had no answers.

"Yet you did not kill me, nor my father." Thor turned to face Loki, to search out his eyes once more. "You said you cared for me. Or was that a lie, as well?"

Loki scowled. "Why must you ask me questions you already know the answer to?"

"Because I want to hear you say it."

"Yes," Loki said, voice waspish. He was leaning into Thor in a way that was threatening and desperate. "I do care for you. I should hate you for that. Now I've failed."

Thor didn't reach out to touch Loki and comfort him, because he knew it might cost him a limb.

"Loki..."

"Do not act like you are not pleased."

"I am pleased you did not kill me," Thor said. "And that is all."

Loki pulled away from Thor, standing so he could put distance between them. Thor followed immediately, afraid to let Loki get too far. Loki was still unpredictable, despite any confessions, he was still *Loki.* If he wanted to, he could be gone without a trace and never return.

"I knew of you from the beginning," Loki said, his back to Thor. "Before my father cast me out, he told me about you. I used to dream of killing you and bathing in your blood."

Thor shivered at the thought without meaning to. He reached forward and grabbed Loki by the bone of his wrist, holding him. Not forcing him to move. It took a while for Loki to turn and face him, and all the while Thor stood there patiently, body anxious. Loki finally turned to him in the darkness.

"I no longer have that dream."

Before Thor could try and speak again, Loki cut him off.

"We don't have much time," he said. "Get on the bed, now."

Thor obeyed, and watched dumbly for a moment as Loki stripped before mimicking his actions. He didn't know how much longer Loki's spell would last, so if they were going to do this, they had to do it now. Thor honestly wasn't sure if they'd get another chance after that.

He reached out once Loki was undressed, pulling him down onto the bed with him and pressing his face into Loki's shoulder, inhaling the crisp scent of him. He had never really gotten the chance to admire Loki in his true form, to really touch and map the contours of his skin. He wanted to do that, now, wanted to have Loki in every way.

And so, when Loki moved to kiss him, Thor turned his head.

"What are you doing," Loki said. He tried to angle up again for a kiss, but Thor held him away, instead nuzzling his neck and clavicle. "Kiss me."

Thor shook his head. "Stay like this for me."

"No." Loki tightened against Thor. "Not like this."

The more he tried, the more Thor held him away, lips anywhere but Loki's own. In his arms, Loki snarled, but did little else. Thor had seen Loki use magic enough times to know the concentration it took. It was a gamble, but Thor thought that maybe for Loki to use any might hinder the spell he'd placed on the room and let Heimdall see in. And it seemed he was right. Loki didn't fight him, but he was stiff and unresponsive against him, breathing harshly in anger and panic.

"You would humiliate me like this?" Loki asked.

"Not humiliate," Thor said against his skin. "Never. I want you like this, as you truly are."

When Loki didn't relax against him, Thor pulled back just enough so that he could still look at Loki, really look at him.

"But I will not force you," he said.

The space between them was untouched and open, and Loki could have closed the distance if he really wanted to. He could have kissed Thor and made himself Aesir, forced the illusion back. Thor was letting him decide, everything on Loki's terms, yet another thing Loki was not accustomed to.

Thor truly thought Loki was going to kiss him, the way Loki went back and forth between looking at Thor's eyes and his lips, like the decision wasn't something he could easily make. And then he moved further away, and Thor thought he was going to leave, but Loki stretched himself across the bed, stomach pressed to the mattress. He didn't *say* anything, but Thor knew what it was, what it meant.

He was careful still as he reached out with one hand and touched the raised markings on Loki's back. There was something beautiful and tribal about them, and they ran the length of Loki's body like a map, swirling in perfect patterns across the skin, which was toned a flawless blue. Thor traced one of the markings that crossed neatly down the center of Loki's spine, following it with his tongue. The cold burned slightly but Thor ignored it, moving to map the markings on Loki's neck and shoulders, the backs of his arms. He rolled Loki over and saw that he wasn't hard at all, still holding some reservations about this. But he did let Thor tongue the design of markings that circled his stomach, and move up his chest until he reached Loki's face.

Thor wanted to memorize all of it.

He traced a mark on Loki's cheek and wondered if was painful at all, if it held any significance, if Loki knew what they looked like to him.

"If you are quite done," Loki said, voice cutting the silent air and Thor nearly jumped, it had been so quiet before.

He didn't sound mad so much as impatient, tired of lying still and waiting. Thor kissed his brow.

"Turn over," he whispered, and reached for his oil.

Loki opened easier for him this time around, and Thor felt less unsure and they both knew exactly what they wanted. The more familiar Thor got with Loki's body, the more his hands curled tightly into the bed sheets. Thor fingered him carefully, forgot about everything else that was happening around them and took his time, working Loki open around him until he was rutting against the mattress, threatening to rip the bedding open with his hands.

Thor was surprised at how much Loki was letting him take control, and he wanted to keep pushing, to see how far he could go. He sat back and pulled Loki up so that he was sitting in his lap, his back flush against Thor's chest and Loki went stiff again, struggling to keep himself somewhat grounded.

"Thor," Loki said, his voice drawn out in warning, but Thor had come too far now to turn back.

"Trust me," he said.

Loki exhaled sharply, but didn't make any move to stop him.

"You ask an awful lot," was all he had to say.

*Let me have this,* Thor thought, *let me show you* and held Loki against him, the cool skin of Loki's back pressed against his chest and entered him, pressing his face forward into the juncture between Loki's neck and shoulder, breathing him in. Loki arched at the sensation of being filled, the now familiar stretch of Thor inside him, and dropped his head back against Thor's shoulder.

"Loki," Thor said, and kissed his icy skin.

He ran his hands greedily over Loki's chest and stomach, feeling the muscles there quiver and jump under his touch. Loki was still somewhat stiff in his arms, trying to control the situation, the movement. Thor let him take his time and get used to it, used to trusting, until Loki started to relax against him.

He started to meet Thor's thrusts, reached a hand behind him to grab hold of Thor's hair and pull at it, give him some feeling of control. They were silent together, shaking all over, Loki's mouth open on a word he couldn't seem to form. Thor's fingers skimmed the sharp bone of Loki's pelvis until he felt that Loki had gone hard again, and that was all the assurance Thor needed to start moving faster, licking and biting the long column of Loki's neck.

Eventually, Loki couldn't hold himself up any longer, and he collapsed forward on all fours, Thor following, hands tight on Loki's hips. They faltered for a moment before getting their rhythm back, and Thor wanted to say something to Loki in that moment, but he was beyond words, just mouthed at Loki's shoulder until he came, muffling his shout into Loki's skin. He felt fuzzy from his orgasm and forgot exactly what was going on for a moment until Loki starting guiding his hand to his cock, hissing, "There, touch me there."

Loki came in a matter of a seconds, arms shaking as he spilled onto the mattress and Thor held him through it. They separated from each other panting heavily, still unable to speak properly. Thor lay on his back, waiting for his breath to return, listening to sound of Loki next to him as he moved across the bed.

He was kissing Thor in the next moment, crawling on top of his body and Thor welcomed it. Loki was the opposite of Thor - body dry and cold, not flushed and covered in sweat. He kissed Thor a bit like he was trying to punish him, to let him know that Thor had pushed him to the limits. Loki kissed Thor until he thought he might suffocate.

"Every time I kiss you, I steal a piece of you. I become you." Loki was becoming warm against him, skin softening further. Thor reached out blindly to touch some part of him.

"Do not go yet," he said.

Loki's lips ghosted over his. "I will always be near."

Thor felt exhausted, maybe just from the combination of everything that had happened over the past few days, but it came on so suddenly he was sure Loki was casting some sort of spell over him.

He fell asleep with Loki still next to him, but Thor woke alone that morning.

--

Odin summoned him that afternoon. Thor thought it would take at least another week before his father would even want to look upon him, he could still feel his anger everywhere around the palace. Thor entered the throne room and saw Odin with his advisers, speaking in harsh tones to each other. They fell silent when they noticed Thor, and stood as if they felt awkward around their own prince. Thor frowned.

"Tell me what goes on," he said.

Only Odin held Thor's eyes.

"Jotunheim has declared war upon us."

"On what ground?!"

Odin gave the command for his advisers to leave and they did so, their footsteps echoing hauntingly in the hall. Thor understood even less than he did before. The only person's motivations he was even remotely sure about at that point were Loki's.

"Laufey claims you came into his lands and stole his only son," Odin said, once the room was empty and silent.

"That is a *lie*."

Thor couldn't remember ever having been more furious in his entire life. To accuse him of that so outwardly, to declare *war* because of it, it was absurd.

"Father," he said. "Loki came of his own free will, he is just saying that to attack -"

"I know what he is doing!" Odin yelled. His voice was sharp. "It doesn't change the fact that he has done it. His armies are already preparing to march for our borders."

Laufey was obviously tired of waiting. He must have figured out that Loki was not going to slay Thor or Odin, and now he was making his own move.

"So we go to war," Thor said. "Is that what we must do?"

"No," Odin said. "I am not willing to make my people face war over what my son has done. You will return Loki to his father and end this before it begins."

Thor felt something unhinge in his chest. On one hand, he did not want this for his people, not at all. On the other hand, Thor didn't want to just give Loki up. He wasn't ready to admit it was over, to just give in. But Odin did not ask him, he commanded him, not as his father but as his king. Thor couldn't just disobey him with something like that.

"You think that will stop Laufey's attack?"

"I think it is worth the effort," Odin said. Some part of him looked haggard, as if he almost understood what Thor was facing, but he didn't show any other signs of it. "If Loki is truly bound to you, then call for him, and take him back. Don't let your people suffer because of your foolishness."

It cut deep because Thor knew how true it was. He knew what he had done, what he was bringing upon Asgard. Thor bowed his head, feeling heavy limbed.

"I will call for him," he said.

--

So where did that leave Loki? Thor had some ideas. If Loki returned to Jotunheim with Laufey, he wouldn't be returning as a prince. He might not even return alive. If Laufey hated Loki that much, then Loki was doomed.

Thor ate dinner that night with his mother and father, and when he returned to his chambers, the guards posted outside his door were gone. He knew what that meant. He sat in solitude for a long while, curled on his bed, touching the sheets where Loki had been the previous evening. They smelled clean and cool like he did. Alive.

"Loki," he said. His voice was quiet, almost a whisper.

Thor's eyes were shut, but the sudden chill of the room alerted him to Loki's presence.

"You look weary," he said.

The laugh Thor let out was painful. If Loki even knew the half of it...but maybe he did. Thor sat upright, forcing his eyes open.

"Your father has declared war upon Asgard."

"I know," Loki said.

Thor suspected as much. Loki had a habit of knowing just about everything, even when it was most inconvenient. And maybe that should have made it easier, but it didn't. Thor held out for Loki's hand and Loki gave it to him.

"My father thinks if we give you back, he can end the war before it begins."

"You know that is not true," Loki said.

Thor squeezed Loki's hand, some sign of reassurance, but Loki did not return the gesture. He was studying Thor, waiting to see what *he* thought, not his father.

"I know. But I cannot see my people suffer through a war."

Loki's grip on Thor's hand was suddenly tight to the point of pain, to the point where Thor thought his bones might crush and Loki's eyes were wide and blank like he was remembering a time from before.

"You think you can give me back and he'll stop? I will *not* sacrifice myself for a people that hate me!"

Loki was a threatening presence by that point, dark and malicious, but Thor did not try to escape his grip. He would take a few cracked bones, he could deal with that. He couldn't blame Loki for not wanting to be abandoned again, cast out. Thor would hate himself for the rest of his days if he did it, if he made Loki go. But that wasn't his plan at all.

"I could never let you go," he said.

Loki released his grip on Thor's hand like it burned.

"You won't let me go," he said, and his voice sounded strange and distant, like he was talking to himself rather than Thor.

Thor stood. "I never intended to. I can't. I will find another way, I must."

He must have had some incredibly brave and stupid look on his face, because Loki narrowed his eyes dangerously, stepping forward.

"You have a plan," he said. Without waiting for Thor to explain he added, "It is a foolish one."

"It is not foolish," Thor said, even though it probably was.

Laufey's armies hadn't yet marched for Asgard. They'd be alert and on the ready, but Thor thought it would be worth it to sneak into the palace and slay Laufey himself. With no king, Jotunheim would not march. There would be no war. He told Loki as much.

"You won't get passed the guards without being discovered."

"Then I will fight them all," Thor said. "I have Mjölnir."

"No," Loki said. "I have a better plan."

--

They left in the night.

There wasn't time to try and explain anything to his father, or anyone else for that matter. Laufey was threatening to be in Asgard within just a few days, and Odin was already preparing his own armies. But if this worked, then there would no need for either side to fight.

Begrudgingly, Thor admitted that his own plan was flawed deeply. He was thinking more in the moment, desperate for any way to save both Loki and his worlds. Loki was right, though, he would never make it into Jotunheim without being discovered.

Not unless there was a sorcerer powerful enough to sneak him in.

Thor hadn't even really considered it before. He wasn't about to ask Loki to go back to Jotunheim, no matter what they might accomplish, but Loki was actually the one who came up with the idea. At the mention of it, his eyes glowed and Thor imagined him, his blue skin stained red with the blood of their enemies, and could only nod.

Loki concealed them at the border, once they drew close to the pass and came upon some sentries. They hadn't been there any of the times Thor had come before. It was a bit shocking, to see them so close, because when it came down to it, Thor had never actually *seen* a Frost Giant before. Loki was the only one, and with his half blood, he barely matched Thor's height. But these Jotun were truly giants, more the way that Odin described them. There was something barbaric about them, standing there on the lookout. Unlike Loki, they had no hair at all, and certainly would never match him in beauty, but Thor knew when it came down to it they were still Loki's kinsmen.

"Do not slaughter them," Loki said.

Thor had no intention of doing so.

"There is only one Jotun here I wish to see dead."

Loki grasped Thor's hand put a spell upon them for invisibility, like he had when Thor was first sneaking him into Asgard, only now it was the other way around. It may not have been necessary,

but Thor still held his breath as they passed by the sentries. They were an impressive sight up close, skin the same icy color as Loki's, but scarred and marked from years of battle. The Jotun were clean smelling, holding the appearance of monsters but Thor knew they were not that at all. They looked tired, reluctant. Not even they appeared to want this war.

Thor wondered if Loki ever wished he could be close to his kinsmen. His father may have despised him, but Loki never said anything of the others. Thor wondered if they even knew of him, the lost son of Laufey.

They made it into the mountains, bypassing the wastes entirely, trekking through the snow to Laufey's palace. For a while, there was still nothing but snow and ice. Thor was freezing and Loki's presence next to him was not helping, but once they reached the center of Jotunheim, Thor forgot all about it.

The house of Laufey was enormous, an entire network of spiraling ice towers, blue enough to appear almost black, and nearly blinding in their brilliance. Next to Thor, Loki stood frozen, eyes fixed on the towers. It was the first he was seeing of his home since he was a child, since before his father cast him out. Thor placed a hand upon his back and Loki startled as if he was in a trance before remembering himself.

They did not wait for nightfall. Loki wanted to act quickly, for fear of being discovered. Thor was equally worried that his father had discovered he was missing, and would send men to Jotunheim to look for him.

"Wait," Thor said. "What is our plan of attack?"

"Trust me," Loki said, cryptic as ever.

Thor nodded and splayed his fingers over Mjölnir, eager and ready to use her. He hadn't had the chance to for some time. Loki stretched out his arm, calling for ice. It enveloped his hand and curled halfway up his arm into a spear.

"Do you trust me?" he asked.

Thor did not hesitate.

"I do."

The spear shimmered over Loki's arm, reflecting light between the two of them. Thor could see he was nervous, the way his fingers itched at his side. Moments like this left Loki shrouded in mystery, one that Thor could not read. Before, it had frightened him.

"Do you trust me with your life?" Loki asked.

"Aye." Again, no hesitation.

"Good," Loki said, and lifted his arm.

Thor wasn't expecting the blow.

--

His father told him about the war when he was young, and it sounded too unreal to Thor, too terrifying to be a part of history.

"Why?" he asked. "Why did the Frost Giants attack?"

"They had a greedy king," Odin said. "He wanted everything. In the end, it was his downfall."

That night, in bed, Thor lay awake trying to imagine what that was like, to want so much you were willing to destroy yourself.

--

Thor was freezing when he came to. His whole body ached, his head more than anything, a neat cut on his forehead where Loki struck him with the ice spear. He wasn't bound, but he was sprawled on the floor of a place that was unfamiliar to him. Thor could only guess where he was.

Laufey's throne room.

With a groan, he pulled himself upright, wincing as his bones rolled over the hard stone of the floor. Laufey sat before him, above him, seated on his throne, watching Thor carefully.

Loki was standing next to him.

Thor couldn't read his face, and with a creeping panic, he realized that he may have been lied to again. It was either all a trick, or part of a plan that Loki hadn't let Thor in on. Thor swallowed past the dry, cracked taste in his mouth. Mjölnir was sitting neatly in front of Laufey's throne, taunting him. Thor could have called for her, but he hesitated.

"So you brought him to me," Laufey said. "I had begun to think that you had failed me."

"I only need more time," Loki said.

Laufey rose from the throne, circling Thor slowly, a predator. The heir to take over Odin's throne, the only son, helpless before him, bloody and betrayed. Laufey's teeth were sharp and yellowed, a horned crown sat upon his head. He barely looked like Loki at all, and Thor was glad for it. Laufey spit at him.

"You have grown, son of Odin," he said. "And it gives me great pleasure to know that this is the last day of your life."

Laufey turned to Loki.

"Why have you not slain him, yet?"

"I thought you would want the pleasure."

Laufey's lip curled, and Thor absolutely hated the way he looked at Loki, just waiting for the next disappointment. There was no love there, nothing but a means to an end. Thor hoped desperately that Loki could see that, that he wasn't so disillusioned by the thought of his father's acceptance that he would refuse that reality.

"Or perhaps you could not bring yourself to do it," Laufey said. "I would not be surprised, given your inadequacies."

Thor saw the way Loki's jaw tightened when Laufey turned away from him once more. He didn't call for Mjölnir. He waited, he did what he had asked Loki to do for him: he trusted.

"Either way," Laufey said, "it matters not. Odin's reign ends now."

He called for ice, much as Loki had done earlier. It cracked and chipped as it curled up his arm, and then Laufey raised it up to strike.

Thor knew he wouldn't get the chance.

Loki was behind him already, an ice spear of his own already formed. He thrust it upward, straight through Laufey's abdomen. It made a sound like meat being punched, a sick wet crunch as the spear pierced the skin clean through, blood already pooling and dripping. Laufey's expression was that of shock, like he honestly expected Loki to turn on him, even after everything he had done. He hadn't expected Loki to kill him over an Asgardian. Loki twisted the spear as if it could go deeper before pulling it out, and blood rushed forward from Laufey's abdomen and dripped onto the floor. Some began to pool at his mouth.

When he turned to gaze upon Loki, his son, Loki struck him again and Laufey fell to his knees. Thor could hear them crack against the floor. Loki stabbed Laufey again, watching his body crumple on the floor, and then he kicked at his head, eyes bright and wild and absolutely murderous.

Thor stood and called for Mjölnir. Even with Laufey dead, they'd have to fight their way out.

"Loki," he said, when he saw him still stabbing at his father's body.

Loki didn't listen, or didn't hear him. He was snarling, Laufey's blood splattered on his face and clothes. Thor said his name again, louder this time, and grabbed Loki's shoulder, trying to still him.

"He is dead, Loki."

And again, it was like Loki just hadn't heard him, he kept trying to hit Laufey, to hurt him in any other way, until Thor wrapped an arm around him to hold him still. The smell of blood was everywhere.

"It is done," he whispered, and Loki finally stopped, like he just then realized it.

His father was dead.

Thor could hear movement outside the throne room. It sounded like at least ten guards were coming, all heading their direction. Thor readied Mjölnir.

"We'll have to fight our way out," he said.

Loki was already calling upon magic, both hands glowing green. His plan had gotten them into the palace, but would not get them out. Thor wondered just how many were coming for them. They could fight them off, surely, but he worried that there would be too many for them both. Then the prophecy really would come true, he realized, both bloodlines would end forever. Odin would die with no heir.

The doors of the throne room were pushed open, guards rushing in, their footfalls shaking the entire room. They saw Loki standing over his father's lifeless body, Thor next to him, and stilled. For a moment, there was silence, both sides quietly taking the other in. After a while, Thor realized that the Jotun were not looking at him at all, but at Loki.

One of the guards stepped forward, and Loki did not step back, hands shaking with magic. Thor was ready to step in front of him and start the fighting - the longer they waited, the more anxious he became. He could not read their motivations.

"Loki," the guard said, questioning.

Loki looked to Thor for a moment, then back to the guard. His stance was still defensive.

"We had thought you dead," the guard said.

The others began murmuring to each other, and though they whispered, the combined power of their voices made the room shake. Loki watched them, still unsure. They went silent all at once, their gazes fixed upon Loki, the half-blooded prince, the lost son and only heir of Laufey. Then they bowed.

Thor lowered Mjölnir, looking to Loki for answers, but he appeared to have none. They had just slaughtered the king in his own house, an Asgardian prince and a half blood Jotun, and the Frost Giants were *bowing*.

"What is this," Loki said.

The front guard picked his head up.

"We bow to our king."

Loki dispelled the magic from his hands, dropping them to his sides. He had expected much the same welcome as Thor had, fighting and blood, the desperation of the Jotun to kill Laufey's runt son. Instead they seemed to be welcoming him back as if none of that mattered at all. Loki's eyebrows drew downward, face long. He looked younger in his confusion, unsure what to do with Jotun before him.

"I don't understand," he said. "I am not full Jotun. I was cast out. You should not be -"

"You are Laufey's son," the guard said. "Are you not?"

"I am."

"Then you are our rightful king."

Even bowing, the Jotun were still taller than Loki, and it must have hit him all at once, the reality of what they were saying. Loki was now the king, and it didn't matter to the Frost Giants that he was of mixed blood. All those years spent exiled, thinking he would never be welcomed home, and kinsmen were actually waiting for him. Loki bent down and pulled the horned crown from his father's head, examining it, hesitating, and then finally placing it over his own. There was blood upon, but Loki paid it no mind. It shrunk to fit his skull perfectly.

He even *looked* like a king with the crown on, standing upright, chin raised slightly. Thor bowed next to him, head down. When he looked up, he saw that Loki was crying, tears running down his cheeks as he stood there silent. Thor grabbed for his hand.

"Loki..."

Loki refused his hand, instead wiping his eyes dry. He had his kinsmen rise, stepping towards the first guard again.

"Give word to call off the attacks. We are not going to war with Asgard." Loki glanced at his father's body. "And remove this."

"My king," the guard said, and bowed once more.

Thor let himself breathe easy for the first time since they entered Jotunheim. It appeared the Jotun were not thirsty for blood at all, but would rather see peace. There would be no fighting. They had stopped it.

"We need to go back to Asgard," Loki said.

It took Thor a moment to realize he was speaking to him. It all seemed so ludicrous, like a dream, and Thor wasn't able to grasp the meaning of anything just yet.

"Thor," Loki said, his voice stronger. "We must return to your father. There will be no war."

They did not stay to see the disposal of Laufey's body.

--

It was Odin, not Heimdall, who was waiting for them at the gate. He had four guards next to him, weapons at the ready. When Thor and Loki got close enough, Loki dismounted their horse, walked to Odin without any hesitation. Thor wanted to reach out and stop him, take care of this himself, but he let Loki move forward on his own. He was acting as a king now, no longer an unwanted.

"Stay your men," he said. "I am not here as your enemy."

"I would be a fool to believe such a lie, coming from the son of Laufey."

"Father," Thor called, dismounting. "Stop! Laufey is dead."

Odin straightened, but remained ready to fight. He saw the crown upon Loki's head then, and his eyes narrowed.

"Who has slain him?"

"I have," Loki said. "I am now king. There is to be no war."

Odin looked to Thor. He still didn't quite buy it, probably because it seemed too neat coming from Loki, who Odin had done nothing but fear for a thousand years. Loki, who was supposed to bring down his house, end his bloodline, was coming to him as an ally. He could not grasp the reason as to why Loki, of all the creatures in all the nine realms, would not want to see him destroyed.

Still, he lowered his weapon, motioning for his men to stay their hands.

"Speak then," he said. "You have slain your own father, and come to me now. What do you seek?"

"I want nothing from you."

"Your tongue spins more lies, Laufeyson."

Thor stepped between them.

"Let us go inside," he said. "Please. Then you both may discuss this as kings."

Thor was hopeful that Odin would agree, but surprised when he actually did. He must have been desperate for peace, for some sort of resolution. He may not have liked Loki, but if he was offering peace for both realms, then Odin would have been a fool not to listen.

They came together again in the throne room. Odin did not take his eyes off of Loki once, still reluctant to trust him, or anything that he said. No matter how eager he was for peace, Odin was no fool.

He stood before his throne, and Loki remained a step below him, head bowed slightly. Thor stood to the side, anxious. Again, he didn't know Loki's plan, and Loki was still unstable, still full of so much hate.

"The animosity between our kingdoms has been around since the beginning of time, and you would seek to rectify that? How?"

"You know your son has bound himself to me," Loki said.

Odin's lip curled. "I am aware."

"Do not look so displeased. He and I, we can unite our kingdoms, and end this feud."

"How," Odin said.

"A marriage," Thor blurted from their side. His heart was pounding. He had already wanted to take Loki as his consort, and this way he truly could. Loki was smarter and far more devious than Thor had originally given him credit for.

"Marriage," Odin echoed.

He looked between Loki and Thor, realizing what they meant.

"That is your solution? To take each other as husband? It is madness."

"Is it?" Loki said. "We would be ensuring peace between our realms."

His eyes darkened as he picked his head up, matching Odin's stance. Odin did not step back, but Thor did step forward, ready to come between them if need be.

"I would see this done with or without your consent."

Odin snarled and glanced at Thor, as if this ludicrous plan had been all his own idea.

"And what would you do then, hm? Your marriage would only certify that our kingdoms fall. Without any heirs-"

"I can bear children," Loki said. "Producing an heir would not be an issue."

Thor nearly choked, another layer of Loki unraveling. He stood staring wide eyed at Loki before glancing once more at his father. Odin seemed to already be aware of this, which Thor supposed wasn't too surprising, given how much Jotun knowledge he had. He had simply kept it all from Thor.

"Father," he said, as if he could help nudge his father more towards agreement. "You know this is wise move."

Odin did not speak for a whole three minutes. He looked less furious now, and more just

exhausted, and perhaps a little confused. A thousand years of living in fear of Loki, and now this, now Loki wanted to marry his son, unite their kingdoms. It was a lot to take in. Thor was shaking he was so tense, sweating with the possibility of his father's answer.

"Leave me," he said eventually. "I would think upon this. I will call you with my answer."

Loki looked ready to open his mouth and let Odin know that his answer did not matter at all, but Thor touched his arm, silencing him.

"Come. We will go to my chambers."

--

Thor embraced Loki from behind when they got to his room, holding him close against him. Loki was shaking, from anxiety, excitement, fear - Thor wasn't sure. It could have been all three. They did not move for a long while, and Loki did not return Thor's embrace, though he did cease shaking after a few minutes.

"Loki," Thor said. "Speak to me. You seem upset."

"I am not." Loki moved out of Thor's embrace, turning so he could face him. "Your father will agree."

"Then why do you frown?"

Loki traced Thor's jaw line with his fingers, leaving a cold trail in their wake. It was as if he was touching Thor to be sure he was real.

"This is not something I ever thought I would have," he said, and Thor understood.

"But you do have it." Thor covered Loki's hand with his own. "We both do."

Loki kissed him then, softer than he ever had before, his cool tongue licking over Thor's lips.

"I should have killed you when I had the chance," he said. "Now I will never be fully Aesir, never fully Jotun. You have ruined me."

"I am sorry," Thor said, and was not at all.

He kissed Loki again, feeling the way his skin warmed and changed under his touch. There were so many things still that he didn't understand. Loki truly thought slaying Odin was the only way he'd be allowed to return home, but his kinsmen obviously did not feel the same. Why Laufey chose to punish his own son, Thor would never understand. As for Loki...he was something Thor knew he would never figure out.

Thor winced as Loki brushed the wound on his forehead, fingers touching the dry, crusted blood there. There was warmth as Loki healed him, his fingers almost humming against Thor's skin.

"That was a painful blow," Thor said, as if he needed to remind him.

Loki shrugged. "I needed you to appear as my prisoner."

"Yes, but if you had but told me your plans -"

"No," Loki said. "I need to know I had your trust."

Thor could have spent years trying to unwind Loki's logic. Instead, he kissed Loki's forehead, unable to stop himself from smiling. Loki tangled his fingers in Thor's hair, tugging lightly on it, just bordering on pain, until Thor bore his throat to him. Loki fit his mouth to it, inhaling his scent.

"My king," Thor said, and Loki grinned into his neck.

They bathed together. Thor washed the blood from Loki's body, running his fingers through his hair to pull out the tangles. Loki was surprisingly passive, almost contemplative as they bathed, tracing patterns on Thor's thigh. He was still shaken, nearly silent the entire time.

"I didn't want the throne," he said suddenly, voice quiet.

Thor halted his motions, hands in Loki's hair.

"I still hate them," Loki said.

He raised a hand from the soapy water, examining it. He was Jotun, and would always be that way. Nothing could change that now. Thor leaned forward and kissed the back of his neck. He wasn't sure what to say, could only hold Loki closer to him, could only understand.

"Do you think your people will accept me?" Loki asked.

Thor shrugged against him.

"It matters not to me, but I think they will. They are eager for peace with Jotunheim as well, would see their home safe."

"Home," Loki said, soft enough that Thor almost did not hear him.

"Aye," Thor said. "Home."

--

Odin summoned them, the both of them, the next morning. Even if Loki claimed to be confident of Odin's decision, he still appeared slightly anxious to hear his it, as was Thor. They walked to the throne room side by side, brushing against each other for reassurance. Odin was standing when they entered, and he was alone.

Thor bowed to him, and Loki did as well.

"Rise," Odin said, and they did.

In the tense moment before he spoke again, Thor thought of all the ways it could go wrong, and swallowed thickly.

"Thor, son of Odin, you directly disobeyed your king and travelled to Jotunheim. You brought back the king's son and hid him from me, kept him as your own. You nearly brought a war upon your people."

Thor inhaled sharply.

"However," Odin said. "Despite this selfishness, you also prevented that war, and ended the reign of a tyrant. For that, Asgard is grateful. *I* am grateful. And so I agree to your proposal, to unite our

kingdoms as one."

"You," Thor said. "Father..."

"But there will be conditions." Odin looked to Loki for the first time. "You must produce an heir for the throne, or the marriage will be for none. "And I find this, any of this, to be a ruse, some form of trickery on your part, then I will slay you myself."

Thor felt he said it to maintain his image, but Loki still nodded in agreement.

"I accept," he said.

Odin smiled, for the first time since he had discovered Loki was in Asgard. He stepped forward and placed a hand on both Thor and Loki's shoulder. Thor was smiling so wide his face nearly hurt. He embraced his father without thinking, pleased when he returned it.

"You foolish boy," Odin whispered. He pulled back to gaze upon Thor, touch his smile. "You are happy," he said, almost a question.

Thor looked to Loki.

"I am."

--

They joined together in twilight only two weeks later. The fire lit for them could be seen by all the nine realms, and for the first time in over a thousand years, Jotun and Aesir sat together in peace. Thor and Loki sat at the head of the table in the great hall with Odin and Frigga, Thor already pleasantly drunk on mead. In another week, Odin would hold his coronation, and Thor would officially take his place as king of Asgard alongside Loki.

It was not perfect, not by a long shot. Thor and Loki both knew better than to expect anything of that sort. Some members of the court were appalled by Thor's joining with a Jotun, no matter what had transpired. Likewise, a few Jotun were still bloodthirsty, upset at the Aesir for past transgressions. It would take a while before things settled, but for now there was a moment of peace, tranquility that hadn't been felt in years. Sif, though she appeared slightly terrified of Loki, kissed his cheek and Thor's, wishing them happiness. True to form, Loki did not dance with Thor when he asked and called him a drunk fool, but kept his hand on Thor's wrist most of the night, a reassurance, not that Thor needed it.

"Let us retire," he whispered, once the sun had set, leaning close to Loki.

They slipped away barely noticed, wandering down the halls until they reached their chambers. Loki slipped off the formal robe from the ceremony, removed the silver cuffs from his wrists. Thor watched him for a moment, admired him, and then pulled Loki to him, kissing his jaw.

"You are mine now," he said. "Officially. I have you."

"Yes," Loki said, fingers brushing the bone of Thor's hip. "Officially. You cannot cast me back out."

Thor laughed but held him tighter.

"I would never. Must you always doubt me?"

"You are the fool who came into Jotunheim looking for a giant."

"Aye," Thor said. "That was me. And I'm glad of it."

When Loki kissed him, he also bit his tongue. Not to hurt him, not to draw blood, just to remind him that he was there. He was the giant Thor had been looking for.

Works inspired by this one

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!